



STATE OF VERMONT  
Department of Education  
120 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

**VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Capitol Plaza Conference Center, Montpelier Room, 100 State Street, Montpelier**  
**March 18, 2008**

*The State Board of Education shall sustain a vision of high skills, creative thinking, and love of knowledge and learning for every student by setting education policy that ensures student achievement in a safe and healthy learning environment.*

**Approved Minutes - March 18, 2008**

**Present**

**Board Members: Chair Tom James; Chris Robbins; Jessica Bullock; Tess Savage; Kathy Larsen; Brian Vachon; Bill Corrow; Susan Schill; Fayneese Miller**

**DOE: Richard Cate; Jill Remick; Maureen Start; MaryBeth McNulty; Marta Cambra; Tina Muncy; Gail Taylor; Janna Osman; Mark Oettinger; Greg Glennon; John Turner; Karin Edwards; Kerry Garber; Heather Schneider**

**Others: Sherry Gile, VTNEA; Carlene Riccelli, College Board; Dwight Davis, VISA; Charles Parmalee, ACT; Retta Dunlap, VBE; Nancy Kent, NBCT; Jeff Kent, Guest; John Smiel, Guest; Joyce Cunningham, CSC; Julie Peterson, Casey Murrow, SE Learning Collaborative; Stuart Weiss, VAMLE; Linda Bourne, VAMLE; Michele Hubert; Carole Freeman; Ellie McGarry, VCSEA; Susette LaFlesche Bollard; Nancy Cornell; Teacher-Leader Summit Attendees**

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**Preliminaries**

**Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance**

Tom James, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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**Item B: Roll Call and Introductions**

Chair James and Board members introduced themselves.

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**Item C: Public to be Heard**

There were no comments from the public at this time.

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**Item D: Announcements, Board Member Updates** (Chair, Board Members)

Brian Vachon attended the (National Association of State Boards of Education) NASBE middle school study group meeting.

James reminded the Board of his and Cate's testimony regarding the legislation to change the Department to an Agency and eliminate the Board of Education. He has also shared the Board's formal position in opposition of that change. Cate and James will also meet with the business community on March 21 to discuss the Transformation of Education initiative.

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**Item E: February Monthly Report**

Chair James reminded those present that the monthly report has been coming out since August 2005 and it is intended to be a tool for communications from the Board. It is available on the web at: <http://education.vermont.gov/html/Board/schedule.html>. Chair James encouraged all to look at the monthly report via the Department Web site to stay informed on what is going on with the Board.

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**Item F: Commissioner's Update**

Commissioner Richard Cate reported on recent legislative activity, particularly the bill creating an Agency of Education, appointing the Commissioner by the Governor, and eliminating the Board, which would become law in July 2009. Cate also noted that the legislation would change the mission of the Department. He also reported on legislation regarding the STARS certification, school calendar (now a regional school calendar) and the length of school days.

Cate met with students and staff at Edmunds Middle School and Spectrum Youth Services on March 13 to get their feedback, in order to better inform the Transformation conversation. He shared that Edmunds had good television coverage, with students being interviewed.

Chair James questioned the 1967 *Vermont Design for Education* document referenced in the Agency of Education legislation (S. 371) and how it was chosen and Cate responded that there was one committee member who was chosen to generate a mission statement and that there was little committee discussion about the mission component of the bill.

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**Action Items**

**Item G: Consent Agenda**

**Motion:** Robbins moved, Bullock seconded, to approve the consent agenda with comment.

1. **Minutes of February 19, 2007 SBE Meeting**

2. **Capital Construction**

<u>Project No:</u>	<u>School District</u>	<u>Amount</u>
C-474	Harwood UHSD	\$1,513,029

3. **Independent School Approval** (Kerry Garber; Pat Pallas Gray)

Acknowledgement of NEAS&C Accreditation:

- Green Mountain Valley School, Waitsfield; grades 8-12

The motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

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**Item H: Validation of Corrective Action: Missisquoi Valley (MVU) UHS** (Richard Cate, Mark Oettinger, Gail Taylor)

**Document(s):** Green Sheet and supporting document

**Discussion:** Cate explained that MVU has had difficulties making Adequate Yearly Progress for several years and the Department is working with the school administration to improve student achievement. The school is currently hiring a school improvement coordinator, with the aid of the department, to meet these requirements. The coordinator would report to the commissioner directly and would provide the Department with regular updates. This action is an alternative to the “assuming administrative control” as required under 16 V.S.A §165. Cate noted that this is “more dramatic than anything we’ve ever done in Vermont, but less dramatic than the alternatives [related to adequate yearly progress].” One Board member questioned if we had a job description for the director of school improvement and Cate responded that there is one and it can be provided.

**Motion:** Schill moved. Larsen seconded, to vote to validate the commissioner’s required actions for the Missisquoi Valley Union High School. The motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

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### Discussion Items

**Item Focus Topic: Educator Preparation** (Richard Cate, Marta Cambra, Panel)

**Document(s):** Discuss Topic Format

**Discussion:** Cate explained the background of the collaborative work with higher education partners and the Department and introduced Marta Cambra. Cambra introduced the panelists: Jonathan Miller-Lane, Middlebury; Heather McCollum, Union Institute; Joyce Cunningham, Castleton State College; Ben Williams, Goddard College; and Cynthia Gerstl-Pepin, University of Vermont.

Miller- Lane: made 4 points: 1) Expectations- 1<sup>st</sup> year teachers can’t be expected to transform an institution like schools on their own. First year doctors, for example, aren’t expected to transform hospitals starting out. 2) We need to work with experienced allies instead to transform schools. There are master teachers across the state who are interested in transforming education. Research tells us that it takes 3-5 years on the job to be capable of this kind of work. 3) The Level I Licensure Portfolio is an extraordinary story. It’s an example of where there might have been a tension between the DOE and higher education, but instead we’ve been engaged in creating it together. New educators alone cannot sustain transformation, the support between higher education partners and the Department is critical. 4) Jeffrey Sachs in his book *The End of Poverty* emphasizes the importance of a differential diagnosis in order to determine what is wrong with a system.

Cunningham: shared stories to detail the point that if parents and educators know what needs to happen, why doesn’t transformation happen? She explained the difficulties facing new educators when it comes to the tension between what’s right for kids and what’s required by the curriculum/textbooks. . She also explained that certain subjects are not given adequate time because math and reading, which they are tested on, need to be covered first. What we need for transformation is: balance, credit to be given to teachers who know children, and the opportunity for shared expertise.

Heather McCollum – Recommended that the Transformation be conducted using the “backwards design” model (i.e.: set clear goals and work backwards to determine how to succeed). Panelist also strongly encouraged the Board to continue the focus on the achievement gap. She also warned against the large focus on test scores. Alone, they cannot judge teacher or school quality. Utilizing data such as parents reading to children, absences, one-parent households and amount of television watched, can predict achievement data.

Ben Williams- Students need to be in various environments outside of the classroom. We’ll need to train teachers with a broader sense of what a learning environment might be. Transformation and these opportunities need to come from the ground up, rather than top down, and would be unique to the different communities. Let schools choose how to do this. It will have to have a clear structure, thoughtful planning, and serious assessment.

(Fayneese Miller arrived)

Cindy Gerstl-Pepin: The Transformation can only happen with community and round support, beyond just educators, and educators need support in order to implement those changes and do what they can to reach students in poverty and others. A democratic process is needed. People need to be involved. Higher education needs to be more integrated – to work with doctors, families, social workers, etc. Vermont is growing in terms of diversity and collaboration is needed. We value this plan but we have to stop thinking about this as an “education” problem.

Board members asked the panel about their experiences and how to best provide each student with new and transformative experiences to get the best education possible. Panelists responded:

- would like all the good work teachers are doing to become better known by the public – they need to be valued and showcased
- better trust between community and schools
- students who want to learn but do not want to go to class – how do we keep from losing these students?
- mentoring also has a great impact
- intangible skills, such as “cultural capital” that are learned in middle and upper class households such as applying for college or jobs that may not be taught to all students and are key to success beyond graduation. We need high school programs that teach these skills.

Chair James reiterated that the transformation process must be inclusive and not mandated. In order to address the problems faced by students outside of school, interdisciplinary cooperation is key. Cate asked panelists to consider what changes they would make to licensure and ROPA requirements.

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**Item J: RTI Comprehensive Update** (Karin Edwards; Merri Greenia, Principal, Wolcott Elementary School.)

**Document(s):** Discuss Topic Format

**Discussion:** Karin Edwards introduced Merri Greenia, who introduced the guests from Wolcott Elementary School (Lucien Gravel, school board member; Pam Peck, school board member; Kathy Smythe, SLP; Belinda Pike, school board member). Greenia led the Board in a presentation of the positive effects that RTI is having at one small elementary school in the

Northeast Kingdom. RTI emerges from special education law and is used as general practice, addressing three educational questions: What is it that we want students to know? How do we teach it? What do we do if they don't know it? RTI has been used as an anchor model. The major difference is the research-based curriculum in the classroom and the staff has immersed themselves in research. RTI is a seamless three-tier system of instruction.

Changes for students: more consistent curriculum and instruction across grades, more frequent assessment (motivating), visual feedback on progress for personal goal-setting and more one-on-one and small group help.

Changes for teachers: common professional development – everybody speaking the same language, increased data collection and analysis for instructional decision-making, and shared responsibility for student success (using the Grade Expectations as the bar). (Cate commented to the SBE that this is what we hope to see in instruction and this is the second discussion in which the Grade Expectations have been referenced.)

Changes for the Principal: more time inside the research about curriculum and instruction, shared leadership (teacher-leaders, committee chairs), data-based decision making, monitoring for program fidelity and student learning.

Parent, School Board, Community Support: parent brochure and parent night, ongoing conversations with parents, ongoing conversations with School Board and sharing the model with the community in the Annual Assessment Report.

Changes in the Structure and Systems: restructured educational support team as a Data Team, researched-based instruction and greater accountability for fidelity of implementation, program review vs. teacher evaluation, pending change in special education process and eligibility criteria.

What is needed to implement RTI? A culture of shared responsibility for student success, continuous improvement, time for collaboration, assessment and analysis, common professional development and model for fidelity monitoring.

Why RTI? Responses from the staff at the end of one year: Because it is better for kids, because it makes teaching more intentional and accountable, it is more respectful and it's the right thing to do.

One board member questioned whether there were similar interventions for students that are not receiving special education services? It was explained that the first level of intervention is Tier 1 (pull child aside, progress-monitor, give extra attention). If improvement is not seen, the student progresses to Tier 2 intervention. It was questioned, "What if the student needs no intervention at the initial point of assessment?" The response was that universal screenings are given three times a year – and there is consultation with the classroom teacher, most of whom monitor all students weekly.

"How did you become an RTI school and are you seeing more or fewer kids identified?" Wolcott applied to become an RTI school on the way to a conference. They have a stable staff and felt that they had some readiness in place. It is hard to tell if numbers have increased or declined, and it is likely too soon to tell, but it seems logical that early intervention would show

appropriate/expected progress. RTI is going on at Williston Central and Allen Brook Schools in Williston and in other schools in the NE Kingdom.

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Cate introduced new addition to the legal staff, Greg Glennon. Mark Oettinger further introduced Greg and the Board extended their welcome.

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Adjourned for lunch at 12:17; educators attending the teacher-leader summit joined Board members for lunch.

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**Item K: Focus Topic 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Speaker** (Richard Cate, Kay Charron)

**Document(s):** Handout

**Discussion:** Cate explained to the group the background of the focus on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. Kay Charron, assistant director for the department's Lifelong Learning team, presented on what 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are and how they evolving. She asked the group to consider:

What is the new 21<sup>st</sup> century learning model? And how do you build an education system for a world that doesn't exist yet?

She explained there are two sides of the education transformation: the achievement gap and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and critical thinking are the biggest pieces, and they should be embedded in content.

Teacher Leader Summit participants added points and answered questions from the Board. They noted that students “power down” when they enter school, whereas schools and educators should be tapping into that technology that the students are already using.

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**Item L: Desired State Discussion: Educator Associations (Ass't. Supts; Curric. Coords; Sp Ed Dirs ; VTSAC; VAMLE) *How Are the Children? A Step toward the Transformation of Education in Vermont*** (Board Members, Richard Cate, Participants)

Cate introduced Dave White, who in turn discussed the three questions posed and welcomed input and further discussion. What current practices should be included in the transformation? What needs to change? What questions do you have regarding the Transformation of Education of Vermont document?

The discussion ended at 4:10. Comments from the discussion will be posted on the Department's Web site at [http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/future\\_of\\_education.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/future_of_education.html) .

Chair James thanked all for their participation.

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**Item M: Wrap Up and Future Agendas** (Richard Cate)

It was acknowledged that it was nice to have Educational Summit group present and one Board member commented that he was excited and energized to read over his notes following the meeting. A lot of good ideas were heard during today's conversations.

Cate re-iterated that comments from all of the discussions are posted on the Web. He suggested that as a Board, they need to synthesize what they have heard and see how it fits with the Board's agenda. They will begin the conversation of what is the next step at the April meeting. By June, the goal is to establish the WHAT, so that over the summer the Department staff can work on the HOW. Chair James offered that if we are looking at a change in how the Department and board work, effective July 09, then the goal would be to get as much as possible done between now and then – and remain positive.

The next Board meeting will be at Mill River Union High School. The Board always goes to the school of the senior member, which is Jessica Bullock. Per Jessica, everyone is very excited and planning a great day for the Board.

Full integration of technology: Carol King and Bill Romond will be working with folks at Mill River UHS regarding this topic. It was requested that Board members would like to get into a few models of technology integration, in which the SBE could actively participate.

In May, the Board will be at Burr & Burton to discuss second stage of evaluation, alternative learning environments, Pre-K rules and transformation.

Kathy Larsen requested that if there was anything that needed to be done between now and April 8, to please let her know.

A reminder that the educator recognition event would start at 5:00, with dinner at 5:30. Chair James will be introducing the Board.

### **Adjourn**

**Motion:** At 4:34 p.m., Robbins moved, Miller seconded, to adjourn the March 18, 2008 meeting of the State Board of Education. The motion was approved unanimously (8-0).

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### **Item N: Annual Educator Recognition Event (Governor's Ballroom)**

The Vermont State Board of Education and the Department of Education hosted the Annual Vermont Educator Recognition Dinner at the Capitol Plaza, Montpelier. Fifteen of Vermont's top educators were recognized: Diane Bahrenburg, 2008 Teacher of the Year; Susan Hennessey, 2007 Milken Awardee; Nancy Kent, Lisa Therrien, Liz Mirra and Laura Pratt, State Finalists for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics & Science Teaching; Christopher Grantz, Joy Peterson, Zohara Zarfati, Caroling Grace, Daniel Miller-Arsenault, Sarah Squier, Nancy Kent, Holly Kruse, Allyn Kahle, Cathleen Heitmann, 2007 National Board Certified Teachers.

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Minutes prepared by Jill Remick/Maureen Start